



STATE OF MICHIGAN
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

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Valid Vote Definitions

Optical Scan Ballots

MCL 168.799a(3): If the electronic voting system requires that the elector cast a vote by marking or stamping a predefined area on the ballot, the vote shall not be considered valid unless there is a mark or stamp within the predefined area and it is clearly evident that the intent of the voter was to cast a vote. In determining intent of the voter, the board of canvassers or election official shall compare the mark or stamp subject to recount with other marks or stamps appearing on the ballot.

MCL 168.803(2): If an electronic voting system requires that the elector place a mark in a predefined area on the ballot in order to cast a vote, the vote shall not be considered valid unless there is a mark within the predefined area and it is clearly evident that the intent of the voter was to cast a vote. In determining intent of the voter, the board of canvassers or election official shall compare the mark with other marks appearing on the ballot.

Punch Card Ballots

R 168.771(cc): "Valid punch" means a punch of a ballot card such that the chad is completely removed or is hanging by 1 or 2 corners.

Paper Ballots

MCL 168.803(1): Except as otherwise provided in this act, the following rules shall govern the counting and recounting of votes:

(a) If it is clearly evident from an examination of any ballot that the ballot has been mutilated for the purpose of distinguishing it or that there has been placed on the ballot some mark, printing, or writing for the purpose of distinguishing it, then that ballot is void and shall not be counted.

(b) A cross, the intersection of which is within or on the line of the proper circle or square, or a check mark, the angle of which is within a circle or square, is valid. Crosses or check marks otherwise located on the ballot are void.

(c) Marks other than crosses or check marks used to designate the intention of the voter shall not be counted.

(d) A cross is valid even though 1 or both lines of the cross are duplicated, if the lines intersect within or on the line of the square or circle.

(e) Two lines meeting within or on the line of the square or circle, although not crossing each other, are valid if it is apparent that the voter intended to make a cross.

(f) A failure to properly mark a ballot as to 1 or more candidates does not alone invalidate the entire ballot if the ballot has been properly marked as to other candidates, unless the improper marking is determined to be a distinguishing mark as described in this subsection.

(g) Erasures and corrections on a ballot made by the elector in a manner frequently used for this purpose shall not be considered distinguishing marks or mutilations....